

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 EB-08 AID-05 TRSE-00

IGA-02 OMB-01 /098 W

-----271650Z 012850 /50

R 271547Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3131

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 06836

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: SHUM, ID, SN, UK

SUBJECT: FCO ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE

REFERENCE: STATE 72577

SUMMARY: THE INDONESIAN DETENTION OF LARGE NUMBERS OF POLITICAL PRISONERS CONTINUES TO PRODUCE MUCH MORE ADVERSE REACTION FROM BRITISH GROUPS CONCERNED WITH HUMAN RIGHTS THAN DOES THE TIMOR ISSUE AND THE DUNN REPORT. BRITISH POLICY, WHICH THE FCO BELIEVES IS REALISTIC AND SHOWING SOME INDICATIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS, IS TO DISCOURAGE PUBLIC CRITICISM AND TO CONTINUE TO PROD THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT PRIVATELY ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE BRITISH TAKE SOME CREDIT FOR THE SUDONO UNDERTAKING TO RELEASE OR CHARGE THE PRISONERS BY 1979. WITH REGARD TO DETENTION OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS IN SINGAPORE, BRITISH OFFICIAL CRITICISM IS MUCH MORE MUTED BECAUSE SINGAPORE IS A COMMONWEALTH COUNTRY. END SUMMARY

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON SIMONS, HEAD OF FCO SOUTHEAST ASIA

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DEPARTMENT, ON APRIL 25 TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE, SINCE THESE TWO COUNTRIES SEEM TO ATTRACT RELATIVELY MORE CONCERN IN THE UK OVER THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THEM THAN DO OTHER EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES. EMBOFF BRIEFED SIMONS ON BASIS OF TELEGRAMS REPEATED TO US BY DEPARTMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH STATE REFTEL, AND OF SINGAPORE TELEGRAM 1331.

2. SIMONS NOTED TO EMBOFF THAT AUSTRALIAN JAMES DUNN HAD CALLED ON HIM ON JANUARY 27 AND AGAIN APRIL 12. SIMONS WAS IMPRESSED BY HIM, AND FOUND THAT, ALTHOUGH DUNN IS EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED, HE IS QUITE MODERATE. HE NOTED THAT FREQUENTLY DUNN STATED THAT HE WAS ONLY REPORTING WHAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE INCIDENTS IN EAST TIMOR, AND THAT AS AN EXPERIENCED INFORMATION COLLECTOR DUNN TENDS TO DISCOUNT WHAT CANNOT BE CONFIRMED.

3. WITH RESPECT TO BRITISH POLICY ON THE TIMOR ISSUE, SIMONS REITERATED TO EMBOFF THE POSITION GIVEN US BY SIMONS' DEPARTMENT LAST NOVEMBER 1 (76 LONDON 17536). THE FCO HOPES THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER RECOURSE TO UN ACTION BECAUSE HMG IS "CAUGHT OVER A BARREL". ON THE ONE HAND, THE UK FAVORS SELF-DETERMINATION AND "IS NOT SATISFIED THAT THE METHODS USED TO DETERMINE THE VIEWS OF THE PEOPLE IN TIMOR WOULD FALL WITHIN WHAT HMG WOULD CONSIDER A FAIR INQUIRY," AND HENCE DOES NOT FORMALLY RECOGNIZE THE INDONESIAN TAKE-OVER. ON THE OTHER HAND, "WHAT HAPPENED HAS HAPPENED". UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IF ASKED ABOUT THE DUNN REPORT, THE FCO WILL ANSWER THAT HMG HAS NO INDEPENDENT MEANS OF ASCERTAINING WHAT TOOK PLACE. MEANWHILE, THE FCO IS ASKING THE GOI AND THE INDONESIAN EMBASSY ABOUT THE REPORT AND DIGESTING THE LATTER'S DENIALS OF SOME OF THE ALLEGATIONS. SIMONS COMMENTED THAT CRITICISM OF THE INDONESIAN ACTION IN TIMOR IS NOT HALF AS STRONG IN THE UK AS THE CRITICISM
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OF THE DETAINMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS.

4. SIMONS THEN SET FORTH BRITISH POLICY ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN INDONESIA FOR US AS FOLLOWS: HMG MUST BE RESPONSIVE TO SEVERAL GROUPS IN UK INCLUDING AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, MRS. BUDIARDJO'S TAPOL, AND LEFT WING MEMBERS OF THE LABOR PARTY, WHO CRITICIZE INDONESIA ON THE ISSUE. THE FCO DOES FEEL THAT TO PRESSURE THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLICLY ON IT WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, PARTICULARLY DURING A PRE-ELECTION PERIOD. HOWEVER, OVER THE YEARS BRITISH MINISTERS AND OFFICIALS HAVE PRIVATELY "NAGGED" THE GOI AND POINTED OUT TO THE LATTER THAT IT IS DIFFICULT FOR HMG TO CONTINUE TO SEEK AID APPROPRIATIONS FROM PARLIAMENT IN VIEW OF THESE CRITICISMS ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. THE FCO REALIZES THAT THE GOI HAS A SERIOUS SECURITY PROBLEM, BUT WISHES THE GOI COULD EITHER CHARGE OR RELEASE THOSE STILL DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL (THE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FIGURES ARE BETWEEN 55,000 AND 100,000, WHILE THE GOI QUOTES A

FIGURE OF SOME 30,000).

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5. FROM THE FCO POINT OF VIEW, A MOST HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT WAS A STATEMENT MADE BY GENERAL SUDONO ON DECEMBER 1, 1976, IN WHICH HE SAID THAT BY 1979 ALL THOSE STILL DETAINED WOULD BE CHARGED OR RELEASED. THIS HAS BEEN USEFUL TO THE FCO IN TWO WAYS: FIRST, IT HAS GIVEN THE FCO A PEG TO STRENGTHEN ITS REPRESENTATIONS TO THE GOI, SINCE THE FCO CAN URGE THE GOI TO MAINTAIN THIS COMMITMENT AND LIVE UP TO ITS UNDERTAKING; AND SECONDLY, THE FCO CAN POINT TO THIS COMMITMENT WHEN ARGUING WITH BRITISH CRITICS OF THE GOI. THE FCO CAN TELL THESE CRITICS THAT INDONESIAN POLICY AS EXPRESSED IN THIS COMMITMENT IS RELATIVELY REASONABLE, AND THAT HMG IS CONTINUALLY KEEPING AFTER THE GOI WITH SOME DEGREE OF SUCCESS, BUT THAT SINCE THE GOI IS GOING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION, TO HOLD IT UP TO PUBLIC OBLOQUY WOULD BE INTOLERABLE FOR THE GOI AND MIGHT MAKE IT GO BACK ON ITS UNDERTAKING. SIMONS SAID THAT UK REPRESENTATIVES AVOIDED THEMSELVES OF THE LAST MEETING OF THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL

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CONSORTIUM ON AID TO INDONESIA ON APRIL 5-6 TO "SQUEEZE THE ARMS" OF INDONESIAN REPRESENTATIVES PRIVATELY IN THE CORRIDORS. THE FCO ALSO "SQUEEZES" THE INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR HERE.

6. IN SUM, SAID SIMONS, THE FCO THINKS ITS POLICY IS EFFECTIVE, AND TAKES SOME CREDIT FOR THE RECENT INDONESIAN RELEASE OF A LARGE GROUP OF DETAINEES AS PART OF THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE GOI POSTURE. THE FCO THINKS THAT THE CURRENT DEGREE OF IMPROVEMENT IS ALL THAT CAN BE REALISTICALLY EXPECTED OF THE GOI. SIMONS NOTED THAT RECENTLY THE PRESSURE FROM AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ON INDONESIA HAD DROPPED OFF.

7. TURNING TO SINGAPORE, SIMONS SAID THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IS A MUCH "TRICKIER" ONE FROM THE UK POINT OF VIEW SINCE SINGAPORE IS A COMMONWEALTH COUNTRY. SINCE THE SINGAPORE PAP BREAK WITH THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL, RELATIONS ON A PARTY-TO-PARTY LEVEL HAVE OF COURSE BEEN COLD. THE BRITISH ARE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY DURING THE FORTHCOMING COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE OF BRINGING LEE KUAN YEW INTO TOUCH WITH BRITISH LABOR PARTY LEADERS FOR MUTUAL REEDUCATION. SIMONS COMMENTED THAT IN GENERAL UK RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE ARE NOT GOOD AT THE MOMENT. THE GOS REGARDS JAPAN WITH ITS DISCIPLINED POPULATION AS A GOOD MODEL, AND THE UK WITH ITS PERMISSIVE SOCIETY AS A "HORRIBLE EXAMPLE".

8. MEANWHILE, PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS ARE RAISED ABOUT DETENTION OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS IN SINGAPORE. SINGAPOREAN STUDENTS IN THE UK POINT OUT THAT THESE ARE DETAINED UNDER LAWS STEMMING FROM THE COLONIAL PERIOD THAT ALLOWED PEOPLE TO BE HELD WITHOUT TRIAL. THE FCO INITIAL POSITION IS THAT "IT IS NOT FOR US TO CRITICIZE THE INTERNAL POLICIES OF A COMMONWEALTH COUNTRY". HOWEVER, IF PUSHED, THE FCO WOULD, WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING

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THAT THE LAWS WERE ORIGINALLY PROMULGATED BY THE UK IN SINGAPORE, POINT OUT THAT THE UK CAN NO LONGER BE BLAMED FOR THEIR OPERATION, PARTICULARLY SINCE SENTENCES HAVE TO BE REVIEWED AND RENEWED EVERY TWO YEARS. PRIVATELY AND IN LOW KEY, BRITISH OFFICIALS ARE TELLING THE GOS THAT THE PRESENT SPECTACLE OF REPRESSION OF POLITICAL DISSIDENTS IS NOT AN EDIFYING ONE. LIKE EMBASSY SINGAPORE TELEGRAM 1331, SIMONS COMMENTED THAT THE GOS

SEEMS TO CARE ABOUT ITS IMAGE IN THE RESPONSIBLE BRITISH PRESS.

9. COMMENT: THE WEEK BEFORE SIMONS HAD SOUGHT AND OBTAINED FROM US (A) THE PAGES ON SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES OF THE DEPARTMENT'S HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT SUBMITTED THIS YEAR IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACT, AND (B) THE TEXT OF THE SECTION IN THE ACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS. IT IS EVIDENT THAT USG LEGISLATION AND PUBLICLY ENUNCIATED POLICY ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN ASIAN AND OTHER COUNTRIES RECEIVING AID AND/OR ARMS FROM THE WEST HAS AN IMPACT ON BRITISH POLICY AS WELL. CONTINUED EXCHANGES WITH THE FCO ON OUR RESPECTIVE ASSESSMENTS AND POLICY POSITIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA AS WELL AS ELSEWHERE SHOULD BE MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL.

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